



All Things Ignatian



Folic Acid Promotion in the Spanish-speaking Community

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In the United States, Spanish-speaking populations are at increased risk versus English-speakers for neural tube birth defects, associated with folic acid (FA) deficiency. These defects include spina bifida and anencephaly. This project was motivated by our review of evidence showing that Spanish-speaking communities demonstrate a special need for education and promotional services to better understand the critical role of FA in prenatal care.

An English-language FA promotion project, previously developed by pharmacy students, was adapted to target the Spanish-speaking community in Omaha, Nebraska. This former project had evolved through a partnership with the Douglas County Health Department and Kohll's Pharmacy.

Community Partnerships

Pharmacy students Mia Davelis and Emily Reynolds, worked in partnership with Mary Larsen of the March of Dimes. They created an original Spanish-language educational poster and a pre-test/post-test system to evaluate the effectiveness of the project during health fair promotions. School of Pharmacy and Health Professions faculty members Linda Obri and Alicia Vanden Bosch, both with extensive experience in public health initiatives, provided guidance, supervision and wisdom for the project.



Promotions were conducted during Hispanic Heritage Month events, such as the Bicentennial Fair at the Plaza de la Raza, and the annual Bi-National Health Week Fair at One World Community Health Center. Other partners include the South Omaha Community Care Council, and the South Omaha Business Association.

Promotion Encounter

Promotion encounters assessed baseline knowledge and provided needed information about FA supplementation to prevent birth defects. Handouts included Spanish-language brochures, educational coloring sheets, and a bag containing FA-rich dried beans plus a culturally appropriate FA-rich food list.



Various elements come together to complete the vibrant promotional display.



Teaching, observing, and interacting with the cultural diversity of Omaha's Spanish-speaking community during Hispanic Heritage Month

Reflections

As we practiced our Spanish language skills and educated the community, we continually experienced our Ignatian values in action.

- ❖ **Men and Women For and With Others**- Men and women of all ages were concerned about FA use by their families. Those with previous knowledge of FA expressed appreciation for the education provided for others.
- ❖ **Finding God in All Things** - Two women revealed having given birth to babies with spina bifida, emphasizing the importance of the educational effort.
- ❖ **Magis** - A grandmother returned to our booth with her pregnant granddaughter for education. We strongly sensed that other participants would also share their newfound knowledge with others.
- ❖ **Faith that Does Justice** - We felt honored and blessed to serve a community with diminished access to healthcare, and were touched by the gratitude and genuine interest in our educational efforts.



Moving Forward

The National Community Pharmacists Association (NCPA) student group has taken on this project as an ongoing effort. This will help to ensure continuing access to this information for groups who need it. Bringing P1 through P4 students together will also encourage continuation of the project through peer-to-peer education. Promotion will be provided to serve both Spanish and English populations. Multilingual students may be recruited for promotional efforts in additional languages, as well.

New potential partners including local pharmacies, libraries, and community groups are also in planning.